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## **NJMC Kicks-off Shared Services Discussions in the Meadowlands**

LYNDHURST, N.J. – Sharing services, from equipment for emergency officials to financial assistance and feasibility, was the topic of discussion this morning during the Meadowlands Shared Services Breakfast.

“Governor Corzine is outlining ways to allow all levels of government to run more efficiently and effectively, and we know sharing services is one way to make that happen,” said NJMC Chairwoman Susan Bass Levin, also the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Chairwoman. “As a former mayor, I know there is a delicate balance to providing top notch services to residents while staying within the allowances of the municipal budget. If we can establish a mechanism for some or all of our 14 Meadowlands District towns to work together, we can start saving money and increasing our productivity.”

The Meadowlands Shared Services Breakfast brought together local mayors and municipal officials with representatives from the Department of Community Affairs, including the Division of Local Government Services and the Council on Affordable Housing. John Rasimowicz of the Division of Local Government Services, addressed the topic of statewide policies on shared services and what is currently being offered in terms of resources. Lucy Voorhoeve, Executive Director of the Council on Affordable Housing and Robert Ceberio, the Executive Director of the NJMC, discussed existing forms of shared services and planning offered by the state in the Meadowlands.

At the conclusion of the breakfast, representatives from the Division of Local Government Services and the Council on Affordable Housing were on hand to discuss shared services and affordable housing questions.

A new “New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Program Guide,” was released at today’s breakfast. The guide outlines every department and all services offered in the agency to municipal leaders and the broader Meadowlands community. The free guide is available by calling 1-866-NEW-NJMC.

The NJMC allocated \$1 million from the Meadowlands Area Grants for Natural and Economic Transformation (MAGNET) program to provide seed money to implement potential shared services and equipment programs. In addition, the NJMC established a municipal equipment pool which can be used by any of the 14 Meadowlands towns to

assess problems in sewer and storm water lines. The NJMC's regional Geographic Information System is bringing all 14 municipalities in the District on line with this state-of-the-art technology that puts databases, maps and other information at the fingertips of first responders and municipal officials. A Regional Renewable Energy District will help lower energy bills for municipalities as well as make renewable energy technology available at a lower cost by working collectively. There are also programs tackling long-standing problems in the Meadowlands, such as flooding and traffic, on a regional basis.

"The Meadowlands District is fortunate because our agency has already set forth a number of programs that encourage sharing services," said NJMC Commissioner Eleanore Nissley. "The local elected officials of the Meadowlands have always been pioneers in good government and I think we'll see a lot of new and exciting innovations in this area as well."

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